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AUTHOR Heller, Douglas; Sottile, James M., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

The more that educators understand about student motivation, the better that teachers can tailor their pedagogy to prepare students for the job market. The purpose of this study was to acquire a more complete understanding of what drives secondary students and how student motivation and development relate to effective teaching. It is hoped that an improved understanding of what motivates students will prompt teachers to modify their strategies so as to foster self-directed learning in their students. An examination of the literature suggests that educators should decrease the competitive nature of the classroom, pay more attention to developing students' self-esteem, note the importance of making content relevant and learning enjoyable, and that teachers should work to create an environment conducive to learning. Utilizing a qualitative research design, information was gathered through classroom observations, student interviews, and a teacher interview of a 10th-grade, advanced world history course. Specific themes, such as learning, social, friends, and teacher, were examined as they related to increasing student motivation. The study also describes strategies that teachers can implement in order to increase student motivation. Contains 11 references. (RJM)

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Another Look at Student Motivation: A Qualitative Study

Douglas Heller
Marshall University

James M. Sottile, Jr.
Marshall University

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Abstract

This paper examines student motivation and development as they relate to effective teaching. Utilizing a qualitative research design, information was gathered through classroom observations, student interviews, and teacher interviews. Specific themes are discussed related to increasing student motivation. The themes include "learning", "social", "friends", and "teacher." In-depth factors are reviewed from an educational perspective; these factors describe strategies for teachers to implement in order to increase student motivation.

Introduction

It is imperative that we prepare our youth for the job market. The post-industrial economy in which they will have to work places a premium on communication, critical reasoning, and problem-solving skills. It is the responsibility of the schools to foster the development of these skills in their students. Integral to the success or failure of this endeavor is student motivation.

The better understanding educators have of student motivation the better they can tailor pedagogy. It is hoped that this paper will lead to a greater understanding of motivation in both students and teachers, and will produce corresponding gains in comprehension plus retention. If educators fail to successfully motivate students, it is likely they will perform at a level below their ability and/or drop out of school. Society as a whole pays both an economic and social price for decreases in educational achievement.

The purpose of this study was to acquire a more complete understanding of what drives secondary students. This paper will first review current research on student motivation. It will then draw conclusions from primary evidence about what schools and individual teachers can do to increase student motivation. More specifically, from information gathered via classroom observation and student interviews, it will demonstrate what factors shape student motivation and what changes teachers can make in their classroom strategy that will increase student motivation. It is hoped that a better understanding of what motivates students will prompt teachers to modify their strategies so as to foster self-directed learning in their students.

Literature Review

In an article "A Manual of Instructional Strategies," Ashmore (1984) and Project M.E.D.I.A. members address how to foster the development of student motivation. They argue that a student's

desire to learn is enhanced if the teacher adopts an approach that focuses on intrapersonal rather than interpersonal competition. Such an intrapersonal approach grants students a more integral and decisive role in the direction of the class, caters to a wide range of learning styles, and recognizes the significance of the learning environment.

Ashmore's (1984) primary conclusion is that the interpersonal competitive nature of the classroom needs to be replaced with a philosophy that emphasizes intrapersonal competition and which focuses more on effort and less on achievement. According to Ashmore (1984), competition, which prompts students to focus on achievement rather than mastery, needs to be largely eliminated from the classroom. Teachers should reward effort as much as achievement; they should offer encouragement and praise to students for doing their best, regardless of their work relative to others (Ashmore, 1984). For this reason, Ashmore (1984) argues that teachers know what type of reinforcer works best for a given student. Prompt feedback, according to Ashmore (1984), also contributes to increased motivation and retention. Teachers should also strive to move students from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. This can be aided by encouraging students to compete against themselves rather than against one another. Cooperative learning groups and peer tutoring are two ways Ashmore (1984) suggests to foster this attribute. However, maximum achievement will only be realized if the element of competition has been eliminated from the classroom.

Ashmore (1984) suggests that student motivation increases when the students know why they are learning the material, its relation to past and future material, how it relates to the real world, and what is expected of them. It is important for students to know why they need to study a given subject and how the acquisition of that material relates to everyday life. Ashmore (1984) further suggests that retention is increased when the material was made relevant to student's lives. Likewise,

Ashmore (1984) says that by linking present content to past knowledge, the teacher can aid overall cognition and retention. Student motivation to learn increases when students are granted a decision-making capacity regarding the direction of the class. It is also positively related to student autonomy. It is for this reason that independent study leads to improved motivation among secondary students (Todd, 1995).

In keeping with the research of Howard Gardner (1983), Ashmore (1984) calls upon teachers to realize that students have unique learning styles. Thus, it is essential that teachers employ a variety of methods when instructing in order to cater to all types of learners. This will afford all students the opportunity to achieve. Ashmore (1984) suggests that teachers be sure to appeal to and elicit both covert (invisible) and overt (visible) thinking behavior, both of which make learning a more active activity.

Ashmore (1984) contends that students are more likely to take an interest in learning if the environment is conducive to learning. It is important for students to feel comfortable and at ease in the classroom (Ashmore, 1984). If the teacher demonstrates mastery and is excited about the material, students will be more invested and comprehension will increase (Ashmore, 1984). Motivation can also be increased by designing and decorating the classroom in a way that appeals to students. Creating a classroom atmosphere with a low level of anxiety helps students remain focused, and motivates them to take risks (Ashmore, 1984).

Elizabeth Cunniff (1989) synthesizes numerous studies in an attempt to better understand the dimensions of student motivation. Cunniff (1989) based her research on the assumption that anything impeding student motivation is inhibiting optimal learning. She concludes that children lose their innate desire to learn for a number of reasons: among these are low self-esteem, negative

teacher attitudes and classroom anxiety (Cunniff, 1989). Cunniff (1989) thinks that greater attention should be paid to creating a classroom environment conducive to learning, that intrinsic motivation must supersede extrinsic rewards, that increased student autonomy will lead to greater student motivation, that greater attention should be placed upon fostering a positive sense of self-worth in students, and that learning needs to become a more active process.

Cunniff (1989) found that a positive and comfortable classroom environment was directly related to student motivation; the greater the sense of belonging and comfort felt by students, the greater their interest level. Cunniff (1989) believes that teachers need to create a non-threatening environment which emphasizes mastery rather than achievement, fosters trust and respect, and promotes positive attitudes.

In line with current research, Cunniff (1989) concludes that external motivators can be used, but that learning is enhanced if students are internally motivated. She advocates the implementation of a philosophy that favors mastery learning over achievement-oriented learning (Cunniff, 1989). Individual and cooperative educational goals will lead to increased motivation and learning because they decrease the emphasis on interpersonal competition. Cunniff (1989) believes that modeling enthusiasm, personalizing instruction, keeping students abreast of their progress, and relating material to the real world are all integral to student motivation.

Cunniff (1989) found that motivation of students was likely to increase if the teacher adopted an approach that led students to feel valued in the class. Cunniff (1989) calls upon teachers to take a personal interest in their students, to incorporate as much student input into the class as possible, and to make learning enjoyable and relevant. Willingness to learn can be increased by allowing students a decisive role in setting goals. According to Cunniff (1989), if students have input in this

area, their locus of control is internalized and learning is enhanced. Thus, students should be given choices when possible and their opinion should be encouraged and valued.

Because a good sense of self-worth is essential to positive motivation, Cunniff (1989) argues that teachers should place emphasis on fostering their student's self-esteem. A higher self-esteem will lead to a greater level of motivation. Without positive self-esteem, students will be unlikely to take academic risks. Further, teachers need to realize that self-esteem is the most important variable in motivation, and insure that all classroom management decisions they make lead to positive self-efficac (Cunniff, 1989). Related to self-efficacy is a student's perception of his or her ability. If students feel competent, they will be persistent and more likely to attribute their success to ability and their failures to a lack of effort. Cunniff (1989) suggests that teachers can foster the development of student's self-esteem by taking a personal interest in them, by rewarding all successes, and by equating effort with ability. Confidence can be further developed by involving students in decisions related to the course. Regular feedback also builds self-esteem in students.

In an Oregon School Study Council Report titled "To Learn or Not To Learn; Understanding Student Motivation," Linda Lumsden (1995) seeks to determine what teachers can do in order to increase student motivation. Lumsden (1995) believes achievement scores have fallen precipitously because students are not motivated to learn. Lumsden (1995) attempts to ascertain why learning is perceived as boring by students. Lumsden's (1995) central concern is to gain an understanding of why some students are motivated and some are not. Is it the pursuit of a grade or some other extrinsic measure of achievement that motivates them or is it due to an internal drive to learn (Lumsden,1995)? Why are some not motivated; is it because they fear failure and the competitive nature of the classroom, or is it due to a poor sense of self-worth (Lumsden,1995)?

Whether a student is extrinsically or intrinsically motivated shapes how they approach learning, the amount and quality of time they will invest in learning, and what they will ultimately gain from their effort (Lumsden,1995). Extrinsically motivated students, who undertake a task to obtain some reward or avert some negative task are less likely to take an academic risk, expend less mental effort, and are more concerned with gaining the reward than a knowledge of the material. On the contrary, students who are self-motivated prefer a challenge and mastery is the ultimate goal (Lumsden,1995).

According to Lumsden (1995), internally motivated students are also referred to as having a task orientation or mastery goals emphasis whereas their counterparts are described as having an ability or performance goals focus. Those students with a desire for mastery undertake an educational goal in order to gain a thorough understanding of the subject, whereas students with an ability focus are more concerned with their extrinsic achievement relative to others than they are with comprehension (Lumsden,1995). Ability focused individuals view learning as a means to an end, but not an end in itself. They are more concerned with their perceived sense of self-worth, which- to them-is directly related to their relative achievement score.

It becomes apparent that it is essential for teachers to develop students' internal drive to learn. As long as students remain more concerned with their grade relative to their classmates than with content mastery, optimal performance will not be achieved (Lumsden,1995). Further, Lumsden (1995) argues that the system must be modified so that success or failure in learning is not measured solely by achievement. By gaining a better understanding of what factors shape a student's motivation level and the role these variables play, educators can adjust their teaching methodology accordingly (Lumsden, 1995).

It is important for teachers to have some knowledge of the relationship between a student and his or her parents. Whether parents nurture their child's inquisitive tendencies or curb them is very significant. Those who have been encouraged to explore are socialized to see learning as a end means in itself, and have confidence in their ability. Likewise, a student's sense of self-worth, which is shaped by the parents, also affects their academic confidence and motivation (Lumsden,1995).

An understanding of a student's self-perception of ability and competence by the teacher will also lead to higher student motivation (Lumsden,1995). Lumsden (1995) argues that it is important to lead students to see themselves as origins of education rather than receptors. Through socialization at school and at home, students come to believe they are either competent or incapable (Lumsden,1995). It is imperative that teachers foster the development of competence in their students because without it, students will lack self-esteem; their motivation will dwindle and optimal learning will not take place.

Unfortunately, traditional grading mechanisms foster interpersonal competition and lead students either to fear failure or to pursue achievement goals rather than mastery goals. The competitive nature of the classroom threatens student's self-esteem and consequently they withdraw, for withdrawl is less painful than failing (Lumsden,1995). This fear of failure adversely affects their sense of self-worth. The problem is related to the present grading system, in which most are average and few have the chance to be seen as above average. This, in turn, affects whether a student attributes success to effort and ability, or to some exterior variable such as luck (Lumsden,1995). By eliminating the competitive aspect of our classrooms and by focusing on mastery goals rather than extrinsic achievement educators can initiate optimal learning for a greater

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number of students (Lumsden, 1995).

Lumsden (1995) realizes that school is a social event; if a student does not feel as though he or she belongs, their motivation will wane. It is the responsibility of school administrators and teachers to create such a climate at both the school and the classroom level. Lumsden (1995) in line with previously cited research, found that student motivation benefits from autonomy.

In an the article "Classroom Motivation: Helping Students Want To Learn and Achieve In School," Hills (1986) outlines the elements necessary to increase student motivation. Hills (1986) concludes that motivation is low because students are bored in school. Hills (1986) argues that the educational system needs to become more student centered, with a greater opportunity for self-directed learning. Schools in general, and teachers in particular, must create an environment that prompts students to have an active role in their education. Motivation to learn will be increased by providing students with opportunity for independent, self-directed learning (Hills, 1986).

Hills (1986) believes that the adoption of certain classroom management patterns will increase student motivation. Classrooms should stress the relationship between effort and ability, or what the study terms achievement related cognitions. Hills (1986) contends that motivation and thus learning will be enhanced if schools can 1) develop positive attitudes towards teachers in their students, 2) convey that teachers expect high academic performance, 3) make explicit connections between academic performance and success in life, and 4) foster in students a positive sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Hills (1986) contends that too much emphasis has been placed on competitive goal structures at the expense of both cooperative and individualistic goal structures. The net result of this tendency has been an overall decrease in intrinsic motivation within students. As stated above, this tends to

allow few to be recognized as above average, while the majority are seen as only of average capacity. The classroom's competitive nature should be decreased; comparisons between students should become less important and focus must move from grades to mastery goals.

Schools must create an environment that fosters students' internal desire to learn. Hills (1986) argues that those teachers who enable students to become aware of their personal learning processes will witness increases in student motivation. Hill's (1986) analysis of research found that students were more involved and personally invested in those learning activities that stimulated intrinsic motivation. Such activities granted students a significant degree of autonomy as well. The message inherent in these findings is the importance of teachers varying their instructional methods, appealing to students' inherent desire to learn, and the necessity of keeping students focused on the learning task itself rather than upon their grade or some other extrinsic motivator, all of which diminish learning (Hills,1986).

The last and overriding component essential to motivation is a student's personal sense of self-esteem. Integral to this, Hills (1986) argues, is the student/teacher relationship and the level of student engagement in the learning process. It is crucial that students feel confident in their academic skills. Thus, teachers need to recognize all student success. This is true of effort as well, which should garnish more praise than high achievement. Also, the importance of the social aspect of school cannot be underestimated. Students are more likely to apply themselves academically if they feel a sense of belonging and are socially satisfied in school. Thus, it is important for teachers to foster a climate in which all feel successful and competent.

Hills (1986) lists a number of characteristics of exemplary teachers, whom they identify as exceptional motivators. Teachers who display and communicate their enthusiasm for the material

will see increases in student motivation. By basing their instructional goals on the acquisition of mastery rather than competitive/comparative goals, superior teachers prompt students' intrinsic motivation to become the force behind learning. Such teachers also grant a significant degree of autonomy to their students and encourage self-directed learning with minimal parameters. The essential foundation for these elements is the belief that sustained long-term motivation requires that students have a voice not only in the direction of their study, but also in the ultimate goal, the pace, and the assessment of their work (Hiils, 1986).

Methods

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the elements critical to positive student motivation. A total of seven students and one teacher were interviewed. They were purposively selected. The goal was to determine what type of classroom management policies have a positive effect upon student motivation and what factors adversely effect student motivation. A qualitative methodology was employed in order to provide a more representative view of the data.

Qualitative Approach

It was essential to have a methodology that invited participant involvement and expression, and viewed the participants in the context of their lives. Qualitative research allows the incorporation of the participant's feelings, ideas, emotions, personal accounts, and opinions in contexts. It generates a depth of perception and first person account (Denzin, 1989).

Qualitative research allows the researcher to provide thick description, connections, strands, themes, and webs of significance for the person(s) being studied (Geertz, 1973). Qualitative research goes beyond the simple recording of facts and accounts by introducing emotion, detail, context, and "webs of social relationships" (Denzin, 1989, p. 83) that connect persons to one another. It evokes

the subject's feelings and emotions on the subject at hand.

The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this research lie on grounded theory, which is the discovery of theory from data that was systematically obtained from research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). As the name suggests, theory or ideas are built from the ground up. According to Strauss (1987), grounded theory is not a methodology as much as it is a style of quantitative analysis that facilitates the development of theory. Grounded theory helps close the gap between abstract theories and rich description of data (Schwartz and Jacob, 1979).

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to determine what pedagogy leads to positive student motivation. Specifically, the goal is to describe in a student's own words what motivates him or her, in the hope that an understanding of motivation will enable secondary school teachers to better cater their methodology to their students' needs. The primary research question was: What classroom management practices positively effect student motivation? That is, what do students need in order to feel motivated? What factors are likely to lead them to be more motivated?

Participant Selection Strategy

A high school history class was chosen because of my personal interest in the subject and the rich data. Matters of personal and school scheduling, as well as locating a teacher who did not object to interviews and observations, determined the specific class to be observed. It was an advanced tenth grade world history course, which was required. The students chose to take the advanced course; they were not placed in it according to academic ability. The school operates on a block schedule in which periods last 90 minutes. After observing the class for 20 hours, seven students were purposively chosen to be interviewed. The peer groups, ability levels, and performance levels

varied among the students interviewed. The students were asked to keep a journal, but this process failed due to a lack of entries.

Data Collection Strategy

The study involved personal observation of the class in operation, student interviews, and an interview with the teacher. After explaining to the students the purpose of the study, 20 hours were spent observing the students and the teacher. Field notes were taken in both an objective and subjective manner.

The interviews were conducted in an open-ended, semi-structured format. Each participant was interviewed one time and the interviews lasted about 40 minutes on average. There were a series of pre-determined questions that ranged from a general to a more specific format. A premium was placed upon developing a sincere relationship with the participants. It was hoped that a rapport built upon honesty and trust would be developed between the investigator and the participants. The same methodology was used for the teacher interview.

To insure authenticity of the data, there were multiple participants, multiple occasions of data collection, and multiple sources of data. This allowed for triangulation; multiple sources of data used to build trustworthiness in the data and analysis (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Contrary analysis, the process of seeking data that would contradict emerging themes of the data, was also employed to insure authenticity.

Participant Description

Those students interviewed included four boys and three girls. All of the students were age 15 or 16 and all were Caucasian. The majority of the participants appeared to be products of middle to upper-middle class backgrounds. Those selected belonged to or spent time with divergent peer

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groups. Their performance levels varied between average and excellent, with the exception of one student who was failing the course by a narrow margin.

The teacher was a Caucasian female who had more than 20 years experience in the profession. She was interviewed in the hope that her pedagogy, as it pertains to motivation, would have similar themes to those found in the student's responses.

Themes

Thus far we have discussed contemporary literature on student motivation. Given the present research design, four prominent themes were developed. They were "learning","social", "friends", as well as a "teacher" theme. Teachers should incorporate these themes into their methodology.

Learning

One theme developed from this study suggests that in order to motivate a person to learn, a teacher should incorporate hands-on learning and should make learning enjoyable. Responses such as "I like hands-on learning or "I learn best by doing or example" or responses similar in theme were common. Further, these themes were apparent in the responses of both genders. The theme related to learning suggests that changing academic behavior is enhanced when it is perceived as enjoyable by the students. One participant responded that he "learns best when class is fun"; another said that one of the things she liked best about this class was that it was "fun." On the contrary, two respondents stated that they were "bored" in school and felt "it wastes my time." This suggests the importance of maintaining student interest and clearly delineating the purpose of all aspects of the school day.

A general satisfaction with discussion and group learning emerged from the study as well. Most respondents said they enjoy discussion because they "like to debate" and because "it gets them

involved." One respondent said "she learns best through discussion." Related to this was the common response regarding group work by the student participants: "Group work is my favorite because you do the work and it is social at the same time." This response seems to summarize student opinion about group learning. However, most respondents went on to suggest concern over the potential uneven distribution of work that can result with group learning.

Conversely, there seemed to be disapproval of an over-reliance on lecturing. Almost all students felt as though they had to do "too much note-taking." Further, many did not like the idea of block scheduling, for the "classes are too long, I cannot focus for that long." One student who felt as though she learned best from lectures went on to say that her "comprehension slipped after excessive note taking because she is writing words but not comprehending them."

Social

The second theme that developed was the importance of the social aspect of school. Social is defined as being with other people in an interactive capacity. This suggests that motivation will increase if students feel socially fulfilled and have a sense of belongingness in the classroom. Thus, positive peer relations need to be developed in the classroom for maximum learning to take place.

Again, almost all respondents referred to enjoying the social aspect of school. Three specifically said that they like the "social atmosphere" of school. One student said she likes school because "all her friends are in one place while another said he "likes school" because "he likes seeing everybody." Another said he likes school because he likes "being with his friends and seeing a hopeful girlfriend." If teachers can help student's fulfill their social needs, motivation and thus comprehension will increase.

Friends

The third theme that emerged from the research and which is related to the social theme is that of friends. A friend is defined as a person one engages at a social level while at school. Teachers should create an environment conducive to the development of appropriate peer relationships through the implementation of group activities and by fostering debate, discussion, and conversation among students.

Nearly all participants emphasized the importance of having friends and being around their friends. When asked what they liked to do, almost all students said that "they like being with their friends." One participant went further, saying that she likes this class because she "likes her classmates" and she feels "comfortable in the class." It appears that positive peer relations are directly related to motivation; students are motivated by having friends.

Teacher

The fourth and final theme developed from the research is the teacher theme. The students respond to a teacher who is personable, social, and who makes learning fun and relevant. Many students commented upon the teacher's personable approach and style with positive references to her character, such as "she is a nice person" and "she is easy to talk to." One respondent said "she is a nice person, (who) won't write you up all the time." Another said "she is not impersonal and that she can sense your emotions." It is worth noting, however, that this same student believed that the teacher could "get too personal or invasive at times."

Almost all of them liked this teacher because "she is not real strict" nor is her class "overly structured." Numerous students commented favorably upon the fact that they had been able to sit where they chose. One student went on to say that this was one class in which she "is not afraid to

move" and that she "does not feel intimidated in this class." Another student said she is "strict in a better way and she still has control." This theme was echoed by other students.

The students liked this teacher and were motivated by her because "she had an energetic style" and is not a boring old teacher." Other students reiterated this, saying "she is not boring." A majority of them said they liked this teacher because "she is fun, she makes what we learn relevant," and that she "makes it enjoyable." If teachers incorporate these characteristics into classroom methodology, student motivation will likely increase.

Many of the teacher's responses were consistent with the themes developed from the student's sentiments. The teacher believed that overall teacher enthusiasm is the primary motivator. In her opinion, a teacher must enjoy teaching and must enjoy being around the students if they want to be successful. She considered a positive rapport with her students integral to successful motivation. When the class is not responding to her, she changes her methodology. Related to this, the teacher caters to diverse learning styles by making almost everything required of the students worth something. In line with the students, who liked her class because it was fun and the material was made relevant, she seeks to make history fun and relevant to their lives.

Discussion

The themes of this study are consistent with the findings of the literature cited. All of the literature reviewed mentioned the importance of creating an environment conducive to learning. It suggested the importance of creating a non-threatening environment in which students feel a sense of belonging and social fulfillment. The literature argued that school is a social event and that educators must appeal to the social needs of their students if they want to increase their motivation.

All of the participants in the study mentioned the social aspect of school and the importance

of having and being with friends at school. If students' social needs are not being met at school, optimal learning will not take place. It is important for teachers to include this factor in their pedagogy. The teacher in this study fostered social participation by allowing students to sit where they wanted and by allowing peer relations to be part of, rather than absent from, the classroom. Many of the participants also commented upon the personable nature of this teacher and how they felt comfortable and unintimidated in her classroom. Again, if students do not feel comfortable in a class, optimal learning will not be achieved.

Another theme found in both the literature and this study is related to classroom management techniques. The literature showed that student motivation increases when material is made relevant and when learning is made enjoyable. Many of the study's participants commented upon this teacher's energetic and enthusiastic style. Some said she made the content fun while others noted that she made the material relevant to their lives. Some participants spoke of their learning being enhanced when the process is made enjoyable. Consistent with this, the teacher commented upon the importance of making learning fun. The teacher also said personal enthusiasm was the most important variable affecting student motivation. Thus, it seems that teachers must factor these qualities into their pedagogy.

The study found that overall student motivation benefits from a teacher's ability to cater to diverse learning styles, which is consistent with the research cited. The study's participants spoke favorably about the teacher employing a variety of methods, including group work, discussion, and hands on approaches. In order to motivate students, the instructional design should facilitate group work, hands-on activities, and a social network within the academic environment. Students liked group work because it fulfilled their social needs and gave them a more active role in their learning.

The nearly universal dislike of lecturing and note-taking among the participants also suggests the importance of teachers varying their methodology. Too many students are simply "bored" by lectures. The teacher sought to cater to divergent learning styles by requesting multiple types of work of students, all of which were worth something.

Another prominent theme found in the study and the literature is the importance of fostering a positive sense of self-worth in students. The literature linked increased student motivation with good self-esteem. As stated above, many of the participants in the study noted feeling comfortable and uninhibited in this teacher's classroom. They also spoke of liking the personable nature of the teacher.

The literature reviewed mentioned the importance of moving students from interpersonal to intrapersonal competition, where mastery takes precedence over achievement. Educators must appeal to students' internal desire to learn if we want optimal learning to transpire, because interpersonal competition curbs intrinsic motivation. Research shows that we must move students' focus from achievement oriented goals to mastery goals. Educators need to pay more attention to effort and less on achievement, and to equate effort with ability.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain a more complete under-standing of what factors contribute to positive student motivation. The literature examined suggested that educators decrease the competitive nature of the classroom, pay more attention to developing students self-esteem, note the importance of making content relevant and learning enjoyable, and that teachers work to create an environment conducive to learning. Conclusions were then drawn from a number of themes that emerged from a study of the students and teacher of a high school history course. Many of the

themes which emerged from this study were consistent with the research cited, including the need to recognize the social aspect of school, the importance of making material relevant and learning enjoyable, and the need for diversity in teaching methodology. It is hoped that the findings of this study are of service to this nation's teachers, who have the formidable task of preparing our youth for an economy that prizes higher-order thinking.

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